Projects in the hydro-power and irrigation sectors have been taken up for implementation in the State of J&K keeping in mind the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty.

Discussion on Maoist threat with King Gyanendra

227. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that during the visit of His Excellency King Gyanendra to India, the Maoist threat was discussed and India has offered both military aid and moral support to Nepal; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement, if any, finalised in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) Issues relating to the Maoist insurgency in Nepal were discussed during the recent visit of His Majesty King Gyanendra, King of Nepal, to India from June 23—28, 2002. King Gyanendra expressed gratitude for India's support in Nepal's fight against the Maoist insurgency, and sought continued cooperation of India for the steps taken by Government of Nepal to restore normalcy and order in the country. The Indian leadership reiterated its resolve to continue to support Nepal in its efforts for maintaining peace and security in the country. India is providing assistance, as required by Nepal, including by way of equipment and training for the Royal Nepal Army and the Special Armed Police Force, for dealing with the Maoist insurgency.

Policies to counter Maligning compaign by a Neighbouring Country

228. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India have concrete programmes and policies to counter maligning by one of the neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, how the fund earmarked remained underutilized in 2000-2001 during Kargil crisis; and

(c) the action proposed to enhance publicity and advertisement to counter anti-India propaganda globally ?

THE MINITER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of External Affiars has concrete programmes and policies to counter hostile propaganda by any nation inimical to India.

(b) In the year 1999-2000, the Government was faced with the exceptional circumstances relating to the Kargil aggression and the hijacking of IC-814, Focus from routine publicity activities was diverted to meet this extraordinary challenge and certain previously drawn up publicity projects and events could not be implemented.

(c) Aware of the critical need for a pro-active and aggressive strategy for public diplomacy and information dissemination, the Government is implementing concrete and well-defined action plans to counter anti-India propaganda globally.

Influence of Touts in Regional Passport Offices

†229. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that influence of touts is increasing day by day in regional passport offices and even officers posted in these offices are helpless;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that officers and employees posted in these passport offices have been complaining about this but no concrete steps have been taken so far;

(d) if so, whether Government propose to take any effective step to get rid of the touts and to check prevailing irregularities in passport offices; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and by when ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) and (b) The Government are

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.